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# Tangents





# Editorial

*Because of the nature of our work, frequent examples of police malpractice come to our attention. Like the Negro in this regard, the homosexual seems to be an easy prey for abuses at the time of his arrest. What should be a routine encounter between a policeman and a homosexual citizen becomes something else again. It all stems from the fact that in 49 of our 50 states the homosexual is constantly and deliberately degraded by the archaic laws on the statute books. In its language the law makes reference to the homosexual and homosexual acts in terms that are more disparaging than those in regard to anything else. So the homosexual must be beware of the law and the police who uphold it. The abuse of the homosexual by the police in any circumstance where they maneuver their victim into a degrading and humiliating arrest is an evil in itself. And we believe that these all too frequent cases of entrapment and physical violence represent a picture of law enforcement as the offender and justice as the offended.*

*For this reason we would like to go on record as favoring civilian review boards to investigate complaints of police malpractice. Under present conditions in most cities there is no satisfactory means by which a homosexual, or any other citizen for that matter, who believes he has been mistreated by the police can complain or seek redress. No matter where the person takes his complaint (if he has the courage to complain at all), he will find that the matter goes to the police for settlement. The complainer, then, must be content with having the police investigate themselves.*

*So many homosexuals, and many members of the non-homosexual community, have suffered by this process that we no longer have any confidence in it as a solution to the problem. To us, as to many others, the situation clearly calls for new agencies to be set up to receive and investigate complaints concerning police practices—and they must be completely independent of the police departments.*

*We see nothing radical in making law enforcement agencies subject to inspection where problems in their law enforcement techniques are brought to light. What is wrong with a practical method of publicly and periodically calling them to account? An enlightened and vitalized public opinion could only result—and certainly we would see an improved relationship between the police and those they arrest.*



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TANGENTS Magazine is published monthly by the majority of legally elected voting members of ONE at fifty cents a copy plus ten cents for mailing. Subscriptions, one year only in the United States, Canada and Mexico, seven dollars first-class sealed; no airmail; rates to all overseas subscribers eight dollars a year. Publication offices, 3473 1/2 Cahuenga Blvd., Hollywood 28, Calif. Copyright 1965 by Don Slater Hollywood, California. Not responsible for unsolicited manuscripts, unless self-addressed envelope and return postage are enclosed.



# La Belle Epoque

by Marc Daniel, translated from *Arcadie* by Marcel Martin

## V ART AND LIFE

Literature, important though it may be, can never exempt the social historian from having recourse to other more direct sources of information — chronicles, mémoires, and news items. And if we are to attempt to learn something of the kind of life led in 1900 by the hundreds of thousands of “normal” homosexuals — those who were not particularly effeminate, who were not neurotic or lovers of adolescents — who quite understandably did not attract the attention of writers, it becomes particularly essential that we close the books and look for our information elsewhere.

It is true that one does find, here and there in literature a character like the Princess de Guermantes’ discreet usher in Proust’s novel who, without even knowing him, falls so sincerely in love with the Duke de Châtellerault, but characters of this kind are few, and, in general, we have to be content with imagining this kind of person for ourselves.

As an example of a virile homosexual affection I am very fond of citing the passage in which Colette, in *Ces Plaisirs*, speaks of her re-

nowned friend, the poet, and of his companion, “*le petit*,” a fine and radiant person. We should remember, however, that this text was written well after the *Belle Epoque*. But I was particularly surprised to find a passage, almost equally beautiful, written by Charles-Louis Philippe, a man who was in no way homosexual. These memorable lines appeared in the August 1st issue of *Canard Sauvage*, 1903, in connection with the trial of Jacques d’Adelswärd-Fersen.

I remember two hobos who, one autumn evening during my childhood, were sitting on the edge of a ditch-bank. They had their arms around each other’s neck and were holding each other close — their hands were clasped and they were kissing. Life was for them a drudgery but their hearts were united. They had no wives, no mothers, no brothers — consequently each was for the other a wife, a mother — a brother. I was fifteen — one learns a great deal at school. I understood. I hid behind a hedge so that they could not see me, and I learned how good it was that one man could be for another. These are men of noble hearts on whom Nature has played a trick and who bear this strange passion like a burden. They are in no need of prefaces by Rostand, nor do they need corsets, jewels, or black masses. They comport themselves with passion but with simplicity. And who among us will condemn them? Who is



bold enough to condemn his neighbor in his flesh and blood? every passion is good and great and normal since it exists.

For men like these, bums or poets, ushers or clerks, their daily activities in 1900 were, with few exceptions, almost identical with those of their counterparts today, but what a difference there must be in psychological attitudes. An understanding such as that shown by Charles-Louis Philippe was then exceptional, and rare — certainly very rare indeed — were the middle-class homosexuals capable of judging their own particular nature in its true light as being not of moral order but of a biological and sociological one.<sup>34</sup> Now, to be exact, it is all the more difficult to form an accurate picture of such matters because the line of demarcation between certain sexual neuroses and this “normal” virile, healthy form of homosexuality which creates the attraction often felt by intellectuals for the working man, is often wavering and indistinct.<sup>35</sup> M. de Charlus’ inversion might just as easily have led him to a robust and masculine kind of love as to vice. Little things can make such differences. If only Jean Lorrain had not been addicted to ether, if only, instead of frequenting shadowy and questionable levels of society he had formed a lasting relationship with a colossus who might or might not wear underwear or an apple-green cardigan, far from considering him a neurotic invalid, we would consider him a “normal” homosexual. And who can say whether neuroticism plays a part in a case like that of the pianist Voyer who, the evening of the 18th of June, 1880, was surprised by the police in the Bois de Vincennes “resting his left hand on a cane, his right hand indelicately on the trousers of an artillerian?”<sup>36</sup>

This problem is particularly touchy when it becomes a matter of trying

to define in literature someone like Georges Eeckhoud. In *Eskal Vigor*, in *Mes Communions*, what contrasts there are. On the one hand, the style is very “end of the century” — almost the “artistic” style of Jean Lorrain or Huysmans, laden with adjectives, rare words, and is further burdened with a kind of Flemish heaviness, on the other hand, there is a marked taste for popular surroundings bordering, here, if not on anarchy, certainly on socialism. There is a rather morbid attraction for bandits, thieves, assassins, and professional murderers. But there is no trace of the invert as in the case of Jean Lorrain — there are no jewels, no dyed hair, no ivory headed canes or silk stockings. The lawyer Zambelli, in the story entitled *Le Sublime escarpe*. The Sublime Assassin<sup>37</sup> is madly in love with a young thief who in the end, sacrifices his life for him but is, himself, possessed of irreproachable dignity.

In the novelette entitled *Appol et Broucard*,<sup>38</sup> we are witness to a reciprocal and marvelous passion between two bandits. The tale is redolent of Flemish taverns, fertile humid plains, unsavory neighborhoods, and is told with a romantic grandiloquence which at first glance appears very virile, but which is, on closer examination, found to be decidedly feminine and even somewhat puerile. The tawdry “advice to the love-lorn”, the facile poetry about good bandits, noble outlaws and sublime assassins constitute, when all’s said and done, the literature of a sentimental homosexual, and Gide is a hundred times more virile, despite his little Arabs.

But, after all, where does virility leave off, and where does effeminacy begin? But to answer this question would lead us rather far afield.

Colette relates in *Ces Plaisirs* a typical anecdote — which, if I judge correctly from the allusion to handle-



bar mustaches, must have taken place about 1900. In this one story she sums up better than might an entire exegesis, the eternal drama of those who worship virility, moreover she shows us once and for all and realistically what must have been the life of someone like Marcel Proust, who, leaving the salon of the Countess Greffulhe, would go in search of laborers or milkmen.

Pepe was a Spaniard of the old nobility he was small, rather stiff in his manner chaste because his very timidity kept him so, and rather pleasantly homely. He was helplessly mad for blue, gold, and crimson, for masculine beauty and those blond young men upon whom manual labor imposed the wearing of blue coveralls. Every day around six o'clock Pepe could be found leaning on the railing at the entrance to the subway watching entranced as there emerged from the darkness below the stocky blond necks of workmen clad in every possible shade of blue. Now one day that six o'clock flood which, as it empties the metallurgical and electrical workshops, pours out on Paris all the blues of the forget-me not, the cornflower the larkspur the gentian and squill, brought Pepe face to face with a new and the nameless shade of blue together with a mop of dazzlingly golden hair which hung loosely over the face it framed.

"Ah " murmured Pepe, "Vercingetorix!"

He clasped both hands to his smitten heart and bit his lips. Now a man has every right to whisper aloud the name "Adele" or "Rose", or even, in public, kiss the portrait of a lady but stifle he must a name like Ernest or Jim. Pale, hesitant, like one marching to his death, Pepe followed Vercingetorix. The collar of his jacket, the folds of his elbows, even his galoshes sparkled with freshly cut filings, and sometimes the ends of his gigantic mustache, swinging in the evening breeze, whipped all the way back around his neck. Suddenly he turned to enter a tobacco shop swerving so unexpectedly that he brushed against Pepe. Grazed by the point of his mustache, like the tip of a whip, Pepe staggered.

"I beg your pardon, sir" said Vercingetorix.

"I must be dreaming," Pepe said

to himself, or perhaps I'm going to die. He apologized. He looked at me. He's just looked at me again. Where are my knees? My legs don't know what they're doing, and yet I'm moving I'm following him, I'm

And then he stopped thinking at all, for Vercingetorix, looking back, flirtatiously and teasingly had smiled at him again.

"I felt then, said Pepe, 'that agonizing feeling which warns one in sleep that an enjoyable dream is about to end. But I could not have stopped. A half hour later I was climbing, behind my Vercingetorix, a steep narrow stairway and then I was sitting down in a very clean, very quiet tiny room, where there must have been muslin curtains, for everything seemed very white. Vercingetorix had said 'Sit down, and he'd disappeared behind a glass-paned door. It seemed as though I was alone for a long time. Nothing like this had ever happened to me before. I kept saying to myself 'What if he kills me What if he kills me and I couldn't help thinking that this would be the most glorious thing which could possibly happen to me. Finally the door opened and Vercingetorix "

He clasped his childlike fists and beat them one against the other "No, not Vercingetorix! There was no more Vercingetorix! A monster He had put on a silk shirt, open at the neck and do you know what he had on his head? A a I scarcely dare tell you "

He swallowed hard and made a gesture indicative of nausea.

"A crown of pom-pom roses pom-pom roses with leaves and ferns And those beautiful mustaches. It was beauty defiled, a shameful masquerade

And then, as he said nothing a bitter expression on his face, I asked "And then, Pepe, what happened then?"

"What happened? Nothing happened, of course," he said horrified. "Perhaps you don't find my story funny enough for you. I left I left him something on the table."

But let us not get the wrong idea. In 1900, despite the International Exposition which, according to Prefect Chiappe, had brought on Paris a very troublesome wave of homosexuality perhaps because of the



great numbers of Orientals who swarmed to the capital),<sup>40</sup> public opinion in general, particularly the then all-powerful bourgeoisie, was much less indulgent than it is today in its attitude toward sexual behavior. Following the trial of Oscar Wilde which ended in his being sentenced to hard labor, many French writers refused to sign the protest petition which others, more courageous, sent to the English judges. After the trial of Jacques d'Adelswärd-Fersen, high society in Paris pitilessly closed its doors to him, the proof of this intolerance is found in the fact that in Proust's novel *M. de Charlus* takes every possible precaution to keep from disclosing himself. Twenty years later, he would have gloried in revealing his sexual proclivities at the worldly parties he attended.

As for the law, it was, in 1900, just what it was until 1942—that is, somewhat more liberal than it is today as far as relations with minors are concerned.

The police force, which had at its head a number of distinguished men, was much less active than it is today in the matter of morals, and in general, acted with tact and discretion. In 1904, acting upon the complaint of a neighbor, the Vice Squad arrested all the participants of a "Roman orgy" as they were called in those days which was being held in Montparnasses at the home of a rather celebrated painter. The orgy was taking place behind closed doors, and there were no minors present. The painter and his friends were convicted, but they appealed. On June 19, 1904, the Appeals Court acquitted them and reprimanded the Vice Squad for having exceeded its authority. I am not sure that the case would turn out the same way today.

Still, the prudery of a given judge could then, as it can today, read into the law a "moralistic" interpre-

tation, and, well before the new laws of 1942, it might introduce the idea of "act against nature"—an idea completely alien to the rationalist mind of the 1810 legislator. "Whereas the immorality of the act against nature . . . is complicated by an element completely lacking in the natural passion of one sex for the other, and in the physiological movements of the human being . . . and whereas acts against nature . . . are above all acts of perversion."<sup>41</sup>

To be sure, and as is natural and to be expected, where minors were concerned judgments were just as severe as they are today. The story of the hapless Jacques d'Adelswärd-Fersen is there to prove it. And I am not speaking of other countries, in which the law was harsher and in which the very years of the *Belle Epoque* were marked by a two-fold increase in the number of convictions in matters of morals, often as the result of political or other subterfuge, in England, Oscar Wilde was condemned to three years at hard labor, in Germany there was the trial of Prince d'Eulenberg in 1908.

It was in 1902 that Baron Krupp, the great German industrialist, committed suicide in order to escape standing trial following the revelations in the newspaper *Propaganda* of his activities in his villa in Capri, in 1903 the English general McDonald committed suicide in the Regina Hotel in Paris for similar reasons. It is true that other countries had no monopoly on scandals such as these which were basically politically motivated. In 1876 the career of the Count de Germiny, leader of the Catholic party, was ruined by his arrest in a public urinal on the Champs-Élysées.<sup>42</sup>

Let us pause to point out here that as one always must we should modify our generalizations. While it



is indeed true that, in general, the police and the courts, during the *Belle Epoque*, gave every evidence of acting with tact and discretion, still we are faced with the fact that in 1909 in the notorious "affair of the rue de la Pépinière" a servant named Renaud was sentenced to forced labor on the mere "presumption of a crime," and the presumption in turn was based solely on the fact that he was a homosexual and consequently presumed to be immoral. To be sure this scandalous sentence unleashed a veritable storm of protest in the press and among the public, but much nearer to our time a crowd in Limoges tried to lynch a man by the name of Baratoud as much because of his homosexuality as for his crime. Prejudice, hypocrisy and stupidity are to be found in any and every period.

### CONCLUSION

The advance in the social acceptance of homosexuality which so markedly characterized the beginning of the century was obviously conditioned and in no small measure initiated by the extraordinary development of scientific understanding which came to the fore at this very time. If public opinion and literature had since the Middle Ages been slow to recover any measure of good sense in sexual matters, the fault lay in the fact that science had, from the days of Antiquity, forgotten the most elementary truths of sexuality. It was for the 19th century to bring about a renaissance in this field.

The studies of Casper, Tardieu, Magnan, to cite only Frenchmen, were undertaken about the middle of the century, and their researches were to culminate around 1890 in the first basic syntheses—those of Chevalier, Westphal, Tarnowsky, Rafalovitch, Havelock Ellis, and finally Krafft-Ebing. The science of sexual

psychopathology dates from this period, and the idea that homosexuality is not a crime but a simple constitutional anomaly begins to be generally accepted. Magnus Hirschfeld further stated, brilliantly and successfully, that it was, in itself, a harmless anomaly, neither a neurosis nor a predisposition to a neurosis, but an anomaly perfectly compatible with a normal and fruitful life.

It is on these scientific statements, today universally accepted, that the daily existence of our contemporary homosexuals is based. Once these truths had been stated, it was impossible not to attempt to come to grips with one's own conscience. It was during the *Belle Epoque* that, in Germany, the first tentative efforts were made to form a homosexual organization. In 1910 one was to find in Binet-Valmer's *Lucien* the following significant passage

After all, I belong to myself. I am not an invalid! I don't want to be an invalid. I don't intend to ruin my whole life with vain complaints and worries. I have a right to life, and I intend to live.

The fact that the character who makes this declaration of faith is the son of a great psychiatrist is not without significance. It proves the close relationship between scientific discovery and the awakening of the homosexual conscience. This relationship, first engendered about 1900, would come into its own between 1920 and 1925, it continues today as demonstrated by the existence of an organization like *Arcadie* which has continued to grow and to flourish for ten years.

I do not presume, in these few pages, to have studied, or even named, every manifestation of sexual nonconformity in those years at the turn of the century. I have not discussed "inversion," as they called it then, in its relationship to exoticism, for such a study would have taken



us too far afield. It is for this reason that I have not even mentioned the name of Pierre Loti or others who would have to be considered in this connection.<sup>43</sup>

To have been complete I should have had to study not only France but countries abroad where the trial of Oscar Wilde and the "byzantine" scandals surrounding the entourage of the Kaiser brought homosexuality to the very forefront of the news. Neither have I forgotten that in addition to Sodom there is Gomorrah — the Gomorrah into which the novels of Colette have given us illuminating and tasteful glimpses, and which has been admirably illustrated by the lesbian poetry of Pauline Tarn who called herself Renée Vivien. But, I prefer to say nothing rather than to say too little and to sin by abstinence rather than by omission or inadequacy.<sup>44</sup> In this essay I have had no other aim than to sketch the main outlines of the historical evolution of homosexuality at the meeting point of the 19th and 20th centuries.

In this field as in so many others, the *Belle Epoque* was a period of discovery and innovation. Together with the first telephones, the first automobiles, and thereafter the first airplanes, appear the first great studies in sexology, the first great psychoanalyses of homosexuality, the first affirmations by homosexuals of their right to a life of their own, the first realization of the homosexual self which would result later in the taking of a stand for social recognition. One may state in all reasonableness that not since the promulgation of the Theodosian Code at the beginning of the 5th century had the life of the homosexual undergone such profound changes insofar as his integration into society was concerned as took place at the beginning of the 20th century I do not exclude from this observation the enactment of the Penal Code a hundred

years before the *Belle Epoque*, for that rational and benign piece of legislation had had no effect whatsoever on the level with which we are here concerned.

In the field of homosexuality we have, for the last fifty years, been witnessing that "acceleration of history" which had made such an effect on Jacques Pirenne: Marcel Proust, when he was writing *Cities of the Plain*, could not have dared even dream of an organization so forthright, so restrained, so thoughtful and so discreetly effective as *Arcadie*, but those who in mid-20th century are now working for a healthful, dignified, and reasonable attitude toward homosexuality should not forget the pioneers who, in the full-bloom of the "modern style" and "artistic writing," and at risk of their reputations, even of their liberty, opened the way which leads, ever more confidently, into the future.

34 On this subject, see the trenchant observations of F. Porche, *L'Amour qui n'ose pas dire son nom*, p. 14-15.

35 The most complete study of this kind of attraction was made by Rodney Garland in his *The Heart in Exile*.

36 A. Bataille, *Causes criminelles et mondaines de 1880*, p. 150.

37 In *Mes Communions*.

38 *Ibid.*

39 Colette, *Ces Plaisirs*.

40 E. Raynaud, *Police des Moeurs*, p. 141-142.

41 Judgement of the Court of Appeals of Bourges, January 26, 1905 (Dalloz, *Jurisprudence générale*, 1906).

42 R. Peyrefitte, *L'Exilé de Capri*, p. 29-30.

43 On the homosexuality of Pierre Loti, see G. Veherz, *Le Paradis perdu de Pierre Loti*, in *Arcadie*, No. 29-34 May-October 1956 and more recently the *Ephémérides* by Xavier Beal, in *Arcadie*, No. 66, June, 1959, p. 376-377.

44 On Renée Vivien, who actually lived the maddest extravagances of a Des Esseintes, see *Ces Plaisirs* by Colette.



## East Coast Homophile Organizations Discuss the Great Society

ECHO has done it again, and this reporter feels justified in believing that those of us who have now gone through three ECHO conferences are veterans.

The 1965 ECHO conference New York, September 25-26 had the usual headaches, panics, and exhausting labor for those involved. It would be impossible to praise too much the members of the groups affiliated with ECHO who have lent most of their waking lives this entire year to the planning of this event.

It was worth it. From the moment this reporter turned the key in the lock of the ECHO suite at the Bar-bizon-Plaza hotel to make ready for the press conference to the last good byes on Sunday afternoon, it was worth it.

Despite the newspaper strike in New York during the conference period, the press conference on the Friday evening preceding the ECHO conference was well attended. Although none of the major news media was represented on that occasion, there were reporters from various other periodicals, college publications and minor newspapers. Several of the conference speakers were also present, and this afforded the ECHO delegates an opportunity to meet them prior to the main event. We were also visited, during the course of the evening, by two members of the New York Police force, who came with only one purpose in mind to protect our conference and the hotel against any possible disturbance from outside sources.

The limited press coverage on Friday evening, however, was more than compensated for during the confer-

ence proper. On Saturday CBS Television was on the spot during the afternoon and evening sessions, and filmed a lecture, the cocktail party, and the banquet. This material will be used in a documentary on homosexuality which CBS will air sometime before next spring. On Sunday a part of the proceedings was filmed by ABC-TV — and the New York Herald Tribune sent a reporter to interview Dick Lietsch, ECHO conference coordinator.

The conference was attended by approximately 150 people, including visitors from other homophile organizations all over the United States. It was an historic event in the sense that never before had representatives from so many homophile organizations gathered together in one place. Among them were officers of the Mattachine Society of Florida, the Mattachine Society, Midwest, SIR of San Francisco, Daughters of Bilitis New York, Janus Society of Philadelphia, and the Demophile Society of Boston.

The theme of the 1965 ECHO conference, "The Homosexual in the Great Society" was approached by the speakers from varied perspectives. The over-all tone of the talks during the two day conference period was one of hope for what is finally being recognized as a new minority. Transcripts of the addresses will be available in binding at some later date.

The groups comprising the ECHO affiliation wish to express appreciation to those who attended the 1965 conference, and to express, also, the wish that more of the readers of *Tangents* will attend future confer-



ences. This one was great and those of us involved in its planning are proud to have been part of it.

JODY SHOTWELL

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM ECHO CONFERENCE SPEECHES

Dr Isador Rubin, managing editor of *Sexology* magazine "The damage done by the present social and legal setup is that, far from preventing the rise of homosexuality, it gives rise to the homosexual as a separate creature. A young man faced with homosexual impulses, feels anxiety, and later—especially if these are realized—increased guilt, leading to self-ostracism. He no longer feels 'good enough' to associate with 'normal' people. From this attitude it is only one step to choosing, if he can find it, a society of those who share his 'vice' and whose members are too often united in self-contempt and shame. But our laws are not specifically anti homosexual. They spring, rather, from an entire anti sexual bias."

James Collier, author of *The Hypocritical American* "The American public is still hostile to homosexuality and also to all non-coital sex. What can be done about this? Ventilate. Have the subject talked about. There will be more information and a view of reality may in time lead to more realistic legislation."

Gilbert Cantor, attorney for ACLU and CORE "I see a clear parallel between the Negro and the homosexual in the area of civil rights. The homosexual faces less discrimination in education, housing and employment, but at the cost of concealment—which is impossible for the Negro. The homosexual, however, in another sense has fewer rights—it is no crime to be a Negro. But this is

another parallel with both Negro and homosexual there is a sexual spectre involved. Under much anti-Negro feeling lies sex fear. The sex-fear of homosexuality is somewhat different in nature, since it seems to those fearing it to threaten a diminished demand for heterosexuality and therefore to threaten our system of accepted values. The homosexual who chooses to picket for his rights may expect a different response from that experienced by the Negro."

Dr Clarence Tripp, clinical instructor, Medical Center, Brooklyn "A homosexual relationship must be closer than a heterosexual one because there is no sex-difference protection for the partners." The doctor's advice in case of quarrels "First, don't attack the person as ego. Don't say, 'You're a slob.' Say, 'Please wash your dishes.' Second, if your feelings are hurt, don't attack but explain how you feel. Third, if attacked, don't defend, join the attack, try to find every bit of justification in it that you can. And remember, hostility is still a sign of love, when you are really out, you are indifferent."

Ernest van den Haag, Ph.D., New York University "Picketing will do no good. With the Negro groups these demonstrations were to protest non-institution of the rights given them by law. But the rights and laws came first. The homosexual must fight first for law reform."

Franklin E. Kameny, Ph.D., Washington Mattachine Society "We have picketed the U.S. Civil Service Commission, Independence Hall in Philadelphia, the Pentagon, and the U.S. State Department. The public reaction has on the whole been favorable. There were many expressions of surprise, few provocative outbursts. We emphasized appearance. The women all wore dresses, the men suits with white shirts. Picketing was



conducted in near silence. Several commented it was the best-dressed, most orderly picket line they had ever seen. In making this policy we are not forming any judgement on dress as such, but only noting public opinion regarding dress—that the opposition to the anti-Viet Nam demonstrators centered oftenest on their beards and sneakers. We did not enter into picketing easily and continue to use it as a last resort. We notify the institution several times and offer to call off picketing if they will enter into negotiations.”

Paul Goodman, author and critic: “We can’t really plan for a Great Society without first having a decent society. At the time of the Jenkins case I waited, in vain, for some note of revulsion in the press reportage—not to what Jenkins had done, but to what the police had done—some feeling that the cops’ peeking at Jenkins was in itself a moral fault. There was none. And I submit that in a *decent* society, which we do not now have, there would be one. And what would the moral attitude of a decent society be? I would like to think it would be something like mine. Let be. If neurosis springs, as Freud and I seem to have concluded, from what you can’t do, then I would say, by all means *Do*. You may ask, in the decent society, a freer society, will there be more homosexuality? Yes, I imagine so. I’m not afraid of it.” Question: “What is the greatest problem facing the homosexual today?” Answer: “The atom bomb.” Question: “Has there ever been or is there today a decent society?” Answer: “I think Denmark is pretty decent.” Question: “Are things getting better or worse?” Answer: “Better. An instance is the treatment of narcotics addicts.” Question: “What would be the place of the homosexual in the decent society?” Answer: “In the decent society, I

don’t think the word ‘homosexual’ would be used.” Applause.

Dr. George Weinberg: “The bias against homosexuality in analysis, psychoanalysis has several roots. First, basic, is Freud’s Victorian ethic, that the judgement of any sex activity is its end, and that the proper end must be coitus. Among other less obvious and therefore perhaps more dangerous factors is that of heterosexual jealousy, which gives rise to talk of ‘immorality’ which H. L. Mencken defined as ‘the lurking fear that someone, somewhere, may be happy.’ Still another factor, now noted and sometimes made allowance for in analysis, but more often, sadly, furthered by analysis, is the trend toward uniformity—and certainly the homosexual is *not* the man next door. Last, with analysis there is an automatic need to look for problems. If homosexuality as such is defined as a problem, *the* problem, then the analyst has found a ‘condition’ he can treat.” Weinberg stressed the dangers of psychoanalysis to homosexuals repeatedly throughout his talk. He concluded with the following admonitions to analysts: “1. If you feel repugnance for homosexual activity, it might be well to look at yourself, consider if you are the proper analyst for this patient. 2. Analysis should try to change the patient *least*, not most. The purpose is to make it possible for the patient to lead his own life, not to make him into someone else. 3. Guilt must be diminished, not accentuated. 4. The analyst must help the patient build a value system with a humanistic orientation, allowing him to realize his full potential in society.”

Dr. Ralph Grundlach reported the results of research he has conducted with the co-operation of the Daughters of Bilitis. There is no evidence that lesbians favor one parent over another. One half of the lesbians he has



interviewed have been part of a couple for four years or more. Only two percent appeared to have noticeably masculine characteristics. Two thirds rarely engage in sexual activity

Gregory Battcock reported on "Homosexuality in the Arts" and made the point that often attacks so phras-

ed are in reality merely means of attacking modern art movements with a convenient weapon. Margaret Lewis, is researching state legislative attitudes toward sex-law reform and reported that progress is slow where it exists at all.

—L. MacA.

## Cap and Bells

I am the jester in the court where also

I am the king. And the king loathes the jester,

Has heard his jokes a thousand times, his japes

And, worst of all, his bleak apologies.

The king is sick, sick of the jester, sick

Of the cracked voice, the cracked grin, the tongue

Lolling, the crossed eyes, and the donkey's bray

But the jester cannot stop his jesting

Unless the king commands him, and the king

Will not, because the jester is as much

The king as is the king the jester and,

Like all of us, the king fears his own funeral.

—James Colton



# Black Beauty

by  
Leo MacAlbert

## THE SOUTH

We came from The South.  
The family came north when I was five.

I've never gone back there.  
We moved to Englewood.

## ENGLEWOOD

My mother died. She left my sister and me.

She's the one I've always been close to. I don't remember my mother much. My sister really brought me up. She's old. Then I brought the other kids up.

My father married again. A woman with kids.

And then the two of them, my father and the woman, my step-mother, had more kids.

There were thirteen kids in the house.

My father built a little house in the back. It was really for the younger kids but I used to go there. There and the attic. I kept my books. I read.

I remember reading *Forever Amber*

I was a cute kid and had a good singing voice. I used to take girls out on dates, but I wasn't really interested.

I was always out for men, but I didn't know it, not for a long time.

The kids at school were always looking for sissies. Punks they used to call them. But they didn't call me that. I was strong from helping around the house. I used to wrestle with the boys, really to feel them close up, but I didn't know it then.

One of the boys caught me, said I was a sissy. But I beat him up and he stopped talking like that.

## FIRST TIME

First time I made out was when I was eighteen, in New York City, the balcony of a movie theatre on 42nd Street. I didn't know anything about the balconies then, I was so innocent. But one night, why I don't know, I don't smoke, I drifted up to the balcony. It was really wild then, all the kids lined up at the back, standing up groping each other.

This guy groped me. He must have been 22, 23 at the time, took me home but I was scared.

Next time I came to his place he had another kid, a kid I knew, gay boy, there, and told me "Look, I'm not going to make a play for you."

And he didn't.

But next time when I was there I made a play for him.

Then he took me inside and he



said he was going to break my ass and he did.

I was so sore I cried later I swore I would never do it again.

And I didn't until I was in the Army in Germany And then it was with a German and he was gentle.

SINGING

I was singing in the Army and then when I came out, I sung at the Apollo, twice. First time was with a kid star I hate to sing against kids. Everyone loves kids. We tied for first prize.

Next time I got 3rd prize. We had half-of-Englewood there clapping for me, this was amateur night, but there are more people there from Harlem for their boys.

BOB

Bob was my first lover, first real lover, first person I *lived* with, probably the last.

I met him first at the St. Marc Baths. He likes to go there. I don't. It's filthy I like to go to the Everhard.

Then I didn't see him for about a year and when he saw me again, he dated me, didn't recognize me.

But we made it.

He was a sex-pot. He could come twice without pulling it out, then be ready for more in the morning.

I moved in with him.

It was a nice apartment, Danish Modern, two rooms but very separate so we had lots of privacy I used to cook. At first we shared the cleaning but then neither of us were cleaning so we had a woman in once a week. We paid her \$5 for a half-day, then later seven. She really cleaned.

I was a good cook too. Later when he was sick with the mumps, he had a girl then and she tried so hard to cook it was funny, but she just couldn't cook. Anyway when he was sick she came over, but she couldn't come in because she'd never had the mumps, she came to the door with a big, big bowl of chicken soup and

Bob came to the door and said he didn't need it, that *I* was there and I was doing for him. It really shook her up.

You only hear the bad things about Bob from Basil but I knew the good things about him. He was very good to me. We shared everything we had. When we were going to go away for vacation we saved together

We went to Haiti. We were going to go to Guatemala for another vacation when we broke up.

I knew we were going to break up but I wouldn't admit it to myself.

He was always going off. So was I, but he wanted to lie about it, make a big scene, or confess and make a big scene.

And then there was this big thing about his going straight. Whenever he went away on vacation alone he met a girl.

And he found he could make it with her

At first, the first time, when he came back he didn't tell me.

But I knew something was off. He kept going into the bathroom to get undressed. And I said, "What is it?"

And then he *confessed*.

And I said to him, "Well Bob, what's going to become of me if things really work out between you and the girl?"

And then he said, "Well, I really don't know"

Just like that "I really don't know"

But he knew

Anyway it never worked out with the girls. After a while he just couldn't get it up, to be very blunt about it.

But he was very nice to me. Any time we went out together he took me along. I met all his friends. I never met his mother or father

His mother called on the phone. I talked to her I explained that I was the person who was taking care of the cat and watering the plants when



Bob was away, cause he always had someone to take care of the cat and water the plants.

She was very mad because she had wasted the money for the phone call. It was long distance.

His father is really funny

He's a manufacturer

Once the family took him to the ballet. He turned to them afterwards and said, "What do you think these people do during the day?"

He couldn't imagine anyone spending their time dancing.

Bob never worked for the family business. His mother had an independent income and his father was rich. Whenever he needed money they would send him some.

He worked in public relations.

He's 40 now but he's really kept himself. He takes vitamins, wears ear plugs, eye covers at night, takes special pills for his nails.

He was good for me, but I wasn't after his money. Some of his friends used to say that. Once when I moved out of the apartment to a rooming house, because we quarreled, one of those bitchy queens that was a friend of ours said I only stayed with Bob because of his apartment, but it just isn't so. I thought Basil was a gold-digger though. I just felt it wouldn't last.

We had been together five years.

Now we were still in the same apartment but it was over. I was sleeping with other people, he was.

That was when he met Basil.

"Now he's got another colored boy" I said to myself

He used to tell me about Basil but it was just like the girls. He didn't want me to meet him. He was afraid of hurting my feelings.

And he still wanted me.

Once we met in his apartment, I had moved out by then but I still had things in the apartment. And we made out and he said "This is madness." So the next time he wanted to

make out. I said to him "The last time you said 'this is madness' and if it's madness we don't have to do it."

After that he was very cold to me and we didn't really see each other any more. Last birthday card I got from him was a week late.

I heard that he and Basil broke off after a few months. Basil never lived with him.

I heard they broke up at the Pines, that Basil left crying.

But he didn't know the good things about Bob that I know

PACO

So I left Bob and moved into a rooming house. I've lived in rooming houses and hotels since. I like it that way. If I had an apartment I'd have to buy furniture. I never had enough money for furniture. Bob offered me his Danish Modern when we split because he was going to get a whole new set of furniture but I didn't have any place to put it.

There was this queen I knew named Sonny. And she had an apartment which was always noisy and jumping. Something was always going on. Beds all around the place, even in the kitchen.

First time I met Paco — that's short for Pablo — he's Puerto Rican — was at a party and he was Sonny's boy then. Next time was when I'd split with Bob. Everyone knew about it.

I noticed Paco was making up to me. It was getting later and later and he wasn't leaving and he was sitting on the arm of my chair and lighting cigarettes for me. I was smoking then, and Sonny told me, "It's all right, Paco and I are just friends now." It turned out they had split because Sonny is such a whore. He was doing people in the bathroom right in front of Paco's nose and Paco's Spanish and they don't like that. It offends their pride.

And right off I told Paco "Look



I know you want me because everyone is in couples around here and I'm on the rebound and you're on the rebound. But let's just play it cool."

But you know there are things that don't play cool and one of them is sex.

And we were hot.

All those queens around there in Sonny's apartment were jealous because Paco was the most beautiful thing in the world. He was 17 going on 18 and real beautiful with big curly lashes and wild curly hair and all those bitchy queens were jealous and mad as hell.

One night Sonny came out of the bathroom and said, "You got to go in and look at Reggie. Reggie's got what you like." So I turned to Paco and he nodded like he didn't care if I took a look and I went in for one second and looked and it was very nice looking. Reggie was standing, leaning against the sink with his fly open.

But I just took one look and went out and Sonny was so mad, you could see he was mad, because he wanted me to stay in there and do Reggie and get Paco mad, but I didn't want to. I had Paco. And he was the same. He never made a play for any other queens when I was with him.

He used to say to the other queens, why don't you girls behave like Miss Truman here. She is a real lady. She don't spread herself out like a two-bit whore.

Well, in fact, I was making out, but not when he was around.

We split, but only because he wouldn't keep appointments.

He did keep the one appointment we had to go to the ballet. Oh he loved the ballet. He just sat there with his mouth open, his eyes popping out. I had told him to wear a white shirt and he wore a white shirt but no tie.

"You didn't tell me to wear a tie " he said.

But he couldn't keep appointments. He was a kid, but he was built like a man.

He was the best kind of Spanish kid there is. The kind that is sort of straight. Otherwise they get too femme.

And I got enough sisters. Need some men in the family

After we split he wanted to make up, make out again.

I saw him at a party. And he was staying and staying, thinking I was going to sleep over. But I could see what he was thinking and I said, "Goodbye all. I'm going home."

You should have seen his face fall. Paco.

#### 42nd STREET

The first time I moved away from Bob I moved into a rooming house in the 20's run by a French Canadian lady. She was really nice. She had a daughter who was hot for me, always coming in to clean when I was asleep during the day (I worked at night then) and not even turning on the light to clean. Just sneaking looks at me to see if I had a hard on when I slept.

I told her mother to keep her out.

That old lady was real nice. I drank 4 Roses with her. She knew the ropes. Always looking at the towels for shit stains. That's how you can tell gay boys. Their trade wipes themselves off on the towels.

But there are no shit stains on my towels.

I use a douche. I'm clean.

But the old French Canadian woman died and a Puerto Rican took over and the place was awful, full of junkies and whores. A guy moved in right next to me with a piano and he played all the time. He fancied himself a piano player but he wasn't.

He was drunk all the time. Once he invited me in to talk, showed me pictures of his wife, who left him. It



was her song he was playing all the time on the piano. And I couldn't sleep.

And then some crazy whore moved next door and had parties all the time so I had to move out.

I got this hotel at 45th Street and I'm going to keep it. It's really nice.

Those 42nd Street whores are really crazy. A lot of them don't want to make out, just show off, dye their hair, have people stare at them.

And you know what it's like. Only ones who stare at them are the tourists. But they really think they're something, they tell their sisters how they broke up the whole street. That's how they talk. I don't think they even make out.

45th Street is a real swinging street. Lots of whores, pimps, gay boys, some of them in drag.

Last week I was with my friend Henry and I saw a colored girl across the street and I said that's some piece and he said that's Louie and sure enough it was.

Louie and his friend make out with drunks and roll them.

I asked Louie don't the drunks know you're not a fish. And she said, "A drunk man is a fool. I put a piece of liver down there and he don't know the difference."

I never go in drag myself. I wouldn't even think of it.

## MONTREAL

You know when I cruise along Central Park West lots of times guys won't take me home when I tell them I don't have a place because I'm colored. They want to screw you but they don't want to be seen with you. Or they're afraid you'll rob them or something.

It's not that way in Montreal.

That place is real, wild, swinging.

They have special expensive rooms at the Y and all the queens take them. The showers run all night long.

Then some of them stay at the

Queen Elizabeth just to say that they stayed at the Queen Elizabeth.

Queens are like that.

But the Canadians love colored boys. We get grabbed up.

Last time I was there a painter said he wanted to paint me. I knew that was a lie.

And he took me to his place, an old Protestant Church converted. He used it as his studio, had his living place in the loft.

And there I was with my legs up looking at the old church ceiling.

It was a gas.

Only bad thing happened to me in Montreal was Jesu. That's what the Spaniards call him 'cause he got long hair like Jesus.

I dug the long hair but he was a drag. Spent a whole night working me over, kissing, kissing, nothing else. Then he said he had to go to work and I said, "We haven't had sex." And he said he prefers it that way.

So next time he wanted to spend time I said, look we can go out but then we got to split because I want to make out.

After I came to NYC he kept writing me passionate love letters, but I was wise and told him when he came that I was busy. And busy I was till he left.

I had to. I had given him hints but he is not one who takes hints.

## PRESENT

I think I'm making out okay.

The hotel likes me. They lend me money whenever I need it.

I like 45th Street. It is swinging. I wouldn't like to live on the East Side or in the 70's or 80's. I'd feel conspicuous with all those screaming queens with their dyed hair hanging out on the stoops.

I've only got a clerk's job. I don't save much but it's okay.

I've got a bank loan for my next vacation, a week in Montreal, and



there's \$50 in it I'll use to repay Bob the money I owe him. I borrowed money to leave the apartment.

He's probably forgotten.

I don't think I'll have another lover I'm not looking for one. I just want good company. Some of the guys I'm sleeping with I've slept with for ten years. It's exciting meeting new people.

## FUTURE

Someday I'll be old I guess.

I'm thirty-three now but I don't look it.

When I'm old, I hope my ass still looks good.

Then I'll get the darkest room at the Everhard Baths, lie on my stomach and wait.

# Tangents

WASHINGTON—Opinion pollster Louis Harris recently asked "a carefully drawn cross-section of the adult public" for its opinions on non-conformity. He reports the results in the *Washington Post*.

"The man who stands apart from the crowd—because he does not believe in God, because he pickets against the war in Vietnam, because he demonstrates for civil rights—is regarded as harmful to the American way of life by two out of three of his fellow citizens."

Beatniks, wearers of bikinis, lawyers who defend notorious criminals, teachers active in unpopular causes, student campus demonstrators—these too are frowned upon. And "an overwhelming majority of Americans regard homosexuals as harmful to the nation."

Most tolerant of deviant behavior, the poll discloses, are the wealthy and well educated, and the tolerance level is highest on the east and west coasts, lowest in the midwest and south. Though Harris offers no explanation for this marked geographical difference, it probably lies in such

continuing educational efforts as the following.

NEW YORK—Radio station WRYR FM has been broadcasting a series of panel discussions, interviews and lectures on the subject of homosexuality, involving homosexuals of both sexes, psychologists, clergymen, sociologists, criminologists, and attorneys, as well as officers of the Mattachine Society and other homophile organizations. There were ten broadcasts in all, commencing in September and ending this month. Each was broadcast twice—on Thursday evenings and Monday evenings.

Starting with "Who is a Homosexual?" the broadcast titles ranged through "The Causes of Homosexuality" (Dr. Albert Ellis) and "Homosexuality, a Theological Perspective" (Drs. Arnold B. Come and Benjamin A. Reist of San Francisco Theological Seminary) to "Homosexuality and the Law" a panel including Dr. Joseph Lohman, Dean of the University of California School of Criminology, and Rev. Byron Esheiman, Chaplain of San Quentin Prison), and concluded with "Homosexuality



and Civil Liberty" Marshall Krause of the American Civil Liberties Union

The two interviews (broadcasts two and three in the series) were, first, "The Lesbian," a personal interview with two women who are living together in a homosexual relationship, and, second, "The Male Homosexual."

It is through courageous broadcasts such as these over the past few years in New York, San Francisco and Los Angeles that inroads have been made in the unmapped areas of public prejudice against homosexuals which show up clearly in the tolerance testing poll taken by Harris.

*Tangents* wishes that the tapes of these broadcasts might be aired in the midwest and south. Only through continued and ever widening discussion of homosexuality by rational and responsible men and women, homosexual and heterosexual alike, can the ignorance that breeds fear and hatred be dispelled and replaced by tolerance and acceptance.

NEW YORK—Not only in radio broadcasting, but in magazines with nationwide circulation (see *Tangents*, July 1965) frank discussion of homosexuality occurs with growing frequency. The *Ladies Home Journal* this year ran two articles plumping for sex-law reform. Now the staid *Saturday Review* October 9, 1965 has printed Robert K. Woetzel's fair-minded and coolly reasoned article "Do Our Homosexuality Laws Make Sense?"

It is too bad not to be able to quote at length from Woetzel's synthesis of the U.S. homosexual dilemma, prepared at the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions as part of that Center's continuing inquiry into various facets of the American character. But one quote will have to suffice.

"It is tragic that, where the homosexual is concerned, social institutions

have produced exactly the opposite of the intended results. Laws and social taboos against homosexuality have not only tended to mar the personalities of many homosexuals but have also encouraged criminal behavior. There seems to be no other alternative for many homosexuals than to seek their satisfaction in some anonymous place like a public lavatory where they can explain their presence if challenged."

The outspokenness of this article seems to *Tangents* commendable but also ironic, in that over the past 13 years the *Saturday Review* has consistently refused to accept paid advertising for this magazine which has from its outset presented the same views and arguments as now find their rightful place in the pages of the *Saturday Review*. It is good to learn at last just how far ahead of its time this small magazine of ours has been.

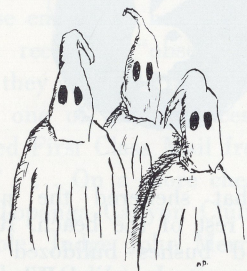
ROCHESTER, MINN. Dr. Walter Alvarez, widely syndicated health columnist and emeritus consultant at Mayo Clinic, reaches a readership many of whom probably never heard of the *Saturday Review*, and most of whom undoubtedly never witnessed a radio or TV discussion of homosexuality.

And in a recent column, Dr. Alvarez came to the defense of homosexuals in unmistakable terms. "I feel," he wrote, "that every sensible physician in the land ought to rise up and fight to get legislators to remove from our statute books our ancient, punitive, cruel and senseless law [against homosexuality]"

WILMINGTON, DELAWARE — Ralph E. Pryor, Jr., slender, good looking star member of the Wilmington vice-squad for eight years, is reported by the *Evening Journal* to be organizing a Delaware klavern of the Ku Klux Klan. "It is to be regretted," said Wilmington Public Safety Commis-



sioner Joseph A. L. Errigo, "that a man who has had police training should stoop so low as to be connected with the Klan." But *Tangents'* own correspondent asserts Pryor's chief merit as a vice-squad man was his ability to lure and entrap homosexuals—an occupation Dr Alvarez and *Tangents* and many other decent citizens regard as pretty low



SAN FRANCISCO—*The Living Church*, an Episcopal journal, reported on October 10, "A score of pickets demonstrated at Grace Cathedral on Sunday in protest against an action of the council of the diocese of California which, they charged, was discriminatory against the Rev Canon Robert W Cromey

Canon Cromey had served as diocesan director of urban work in depressed neighborhoods" and "he has been prominent in the campaign of some San Francisco clergy for what they call fairer treatment of homosexuals. Some church leaders, said Canon Cromey, oppose his championship of equal treatment for homosexuals as 'going against the teachings of God'" He issued this statement "My participation in such issues as homosexuality rocked the boat of the religious establishment, caused money to be lost to the diocese and led some people to imagine that I had besmirched the image of what the Church ought to be." Retorted Suffragan Bishop Richard Millard

"Nobody's trying to eliminate Bob. Like any of the other 200 clergymen in the diocese, he is perfectly free to speak out on social issues." But Cromey is no longer director of urban work, nor has he been made director of Christian social relations, a post he had been expected to be asked to fill.

NORTH WOOLWICH, ENGLAND Pub keeper Daniel Cousins has lost his license and been fined 35 pounds plus 50 guineas court costs as a result of police testimony that "powdered and painted men, wearing earrings and carrying handbags, infested his pub." Said sailors Michael Crookshank and Geoffrey Draper, "We were sitting on the floor and acting like Port Said traders and arguing about prices, but we were not drunk." Said Dr Richard Bell, who with his wife was at the club when the raid took place, "There was a liveliness about the place. I was amazed that I didn't see any signs of drunkenness." Said tavern owner Cousins, "I have never seen any handbags. I have perhaps seen them with blond hair and vivid clothing. I have never noticed make-up."



Said his wife "There are 'queers' who use the public house, but I've never seen them behaving in a disorderly manner" Asked how "do you find people who are 'queers'?" Cousins answered, "Extremely well behaved." He further said that there were "four to six in every bar" Will there always be an England?

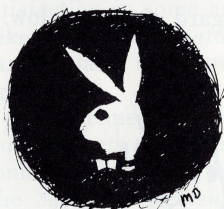


LONG BEACH, CALIF.—Half across the world from Blighty another bartender tangled with police and came off loser. One night in the Fidley Inn, the bartender told two customers, "I won't serve you because you are undercover officers" and the vice-squad boys hollered that this was a violation of their civil rights. Under the law, no California business may discriminate against a person because of his race, religion or occupation. Furthermore, said the officers, the Fidley Inn permitted "the premises to be used as a disorderly house with lewd acts and conversation." James Reimel, director of the State Alcoholic Beverage Control Dept., said the charge was based on alleged homosexual offenses, and ordered its license suspended indefinitely. But the Fidley doors remain open. *Will* there always be a Long Beach?

SAYVILLE, N.Y. The Suffolk County News reports on the annual raid on Cherry Grove this summer. It was carried out by "plainclothes detectives and patrolmen who dressed casually and some hardly at all, in order to make themselves as inconspicuous as possible. They bagged 20 males at Cherry Grove and an additional five at Fire Island Pines in simultaneous raids carried out with split-second precision." While the report seems matter of fact, even good-natured, there is nothing good-natured about printing the names of each and every man arrested. That the court was merely going through the motions of enforcing the law is evident from the fact that all sentences were suspended and fines were a minimal \$50. But the *News* seems to have felt constrained to ruin as many lives and reputations as possible.

SAINT-TROPEZ, FRANCE Another beach, in another corner of the world, experienced a police raid recently

Here on the Riviera a 300-yard stretch of sand was, by common consent, given over to nudists. But, while undoubtedly the largest, General De Gaulle's nose is not the only blue one under the tricolour. Neighbors began complaining about exhibitionists and homosexuals beyond the rocks and



bushes that sheltered the nudists from the rest of the beach. Result: rocks and bushes bulldozed away and nudists put to rout! What ever happened to *Liberte, Fraternite, Egalite*?

#### News & Views

The *New York Review*, in a brilliant essay on the new Kinsey report on *Sex Offenders*, submits it bears out the thesis of Norman O. Brown in his important book *Life Against Death*—which, briefly stated, is that all kinds of sexual expression are equally natural to human beings. But down in old Virginny, the Richmond *News Leader* headlines an editorial "Cracking Down on Sex Criminals" that asks for even stricter laws against what our still benighted society calls deviant behavior. In Chicago the censorship concept dies hard: see July Tangents. The *Sun Times* prints pictures of vice-squads raiding book stores on South State street and hauling away cartons of girlie and nudist magazines. In another issue of the same paper writer Cliff Sessions sheds saurian tears over the plight of virtuous Post Office officials who have to answer complaints about "obscene" mail with a form letter telling the recipient



the P.O. is powerless to interfere with delivery and that only the recipient himself can stop the stuff coming to him by contacting the sender direct. But the P.O. *does* interfere with mail despite its protests that Supreme Court decisions have robbed it of this right. *The New Republic* reported cases of government employees and professional men whose employers had been told they were receiving "obscene" mail before they were told anything about it. And one of the instances cited involved First Class Mail from a "pen pal."

On a more cheerful note, the Topanga Canyon Club is out of trouble. Judge John Merrick of the Mahbu (Calif.) Justice Court has dismissed two misdemeanor charges against the club's owner and ruled that the establishment does not come under the law requiring licenses for dancing clubs or dancing schools. In 1964 the county revoked the club's dancing license on testimony of sheriff's deputies "that males were dancing with males."

A new British play, *The Killing of Sister George*, that tells of the downfall of a soap-opera star who is a lesbian, is a smash hit. *Science News Letter* reports that "men who smoke are, as a group, more feminine than those who do not. . . . therefore, smoking may in part symbolically represent a search for masculinity. The nonsmoker is a better marriage prospect. The heavy smoker is restless, nervous, extroverted, energetic, thrill-seeking, independent, the nonsmoker is puritanic, conservative, stable, agreeable, dependable, religious." If this is science, give us back superstition!

Along the same lines, the Montreal *Star* carried this opinion by New York psychiatrist Lewis R. Wolberg: "Confronted by a woman in [slacks] who sometimes look more like a motorcycle cop than a femme fatale—[the normal man] will soon develop a whole new set of conditioned sexual responses." He sees coming "a civilization of weak men and strong women that find expression in long hair and perfume in males and leather coats and sloppy pants in females."

An American tourist just back from Copenhagen wrote to the Chicago *Sun Times*: "Help! I think a third sex has developed. On our first visit to the famous Tivoli Gardens we saw thousands of young boys, or were they boys? with long hair, much longer and curlier than the Beatles hair, walking around in pointed toe shoes and high heels. Our son, with a crew cut, looked a little out of place."

"Only a little?" Ann Landers answers a boy too late who thought that "any guy who says he's a homosexual gets classified 4F" as follows: "If you think kissing the draft board doctor and announcing that you are a homosexual would have excused you from military service, I have a flash for you. This is what would have happened. The draft board doctor would have turned you over to a psychiatrist for examination—a battery of tests. And if you had flunked, you'd have been on your way to Fort Ord or Camp Robinson faster than you could say 'My high heels are killing me.'" Then again, he might not have flunked the tests.



# Books

TOTEMPOLE, by Sanford Friedman, E. P. Dutton & Co., New York, 1965, 411 pp., \$5.95.

It's no secret that the "gay" novel has long been a sorry thing. It has rarely been literary — often not even literate — and rarely profound, it has usually been defensive or sentimental, if not offensive and down right trashy. Guilt ridden and fearful of the censor's wrath if sin were to go unpunished, it has often been unnecessarily tragic and hopeless. There have, indeed, been a few (particularly those written by British writers) which have avoided some of these faults but have not avoided them all. The *great* homosexual novel has not yet been written, and, in my opinion, it cannot and will not be. This does not mean that there will not one day be a *great* novel with a homosexual protagonist. A few years ago this seemed a vain hope, but as our and society's attitudes toward homosexuality change and as the freedom to write and to publish books about this once tabooed aspect of human life increases, it becomes increasingly evident that there is no valid reason why there can't be a great novel about a homosexual or homosexuals.

There are real difficulties to be overcome. Can a heterosexual (who, we must assume, is a good writer) no matter what his tolerance and powers of observation, really write an honest novel about homosexuality? This, I doubt. Can a sensitive observant, and talented homosexual, capable of distinguished writing for a conventional press, dare write what,

if it is to be of any value, must be a self revealing account? There seems to be increasing evidence that today he can. There still remains the problem of perspective.

The primary trouble with the "gay" novel has usually been that the author has chosen to regard homosexuality as the only "raison d'être" of his novel and has made it the backdrop against which the entire drama of his novel has been played. Often the writer has been obsessed with homosexuality as such and has interpreted all life as seen through this obsession. If he has been a heterosexual he has usually been seeking either to display his own tolerance and his powers of observation of an alien world, or, if he has been a homosexual, he has attempted only to portray the compulsive agony, relieved here and there by physical pleasure, of a homosexual destiny which dictates every act of an innocent victim's life.

Neither approach can produce a satisfactory novel. Important as sex may be in our lives, essential as it may be for our well-being and happiness, it is not all there is to life. Sexuality, whatever it may be, exists only against the backdrop of life itself. Food and shelter, companionship, affection, ambition, and achievement are still present. We must live before there can be sex of any kind.

Let us, for a moment, consider a "heterosexual novel." I can think of no modern novel in which there is more "sex" than there is in John O'Hara's *From the Terrace*. Even so,



every sex scene, the preoccupation with sex itself, is laid against the backdrop of the characters' lives, sex may make the novel spicy, but it's the social, economic, political factors and the personal relationship of the characters which make the novel. No matter what your personal opinion of *From the Terrace* as literature, my personal point is that it has never occurred to anyone to characterize it as a "heterosexual" novel. The very idea seems absurd.

Is there any reason why homosexual characters should not be just as interesting as people as anyone else? The fact is that they can be, and there should be no reason why a great novel cannot be written about them. Today any writer is free to accept homosexuality as another of life's interesting phenomena and, like heterosexuality, as a way of life, and then to proceed unselfconsciously to deal with life itself, for life not sex is what great novels are made of.

There have been at least two books in the last few years which prove that this opinion of mine is sound. No one can possibly call James Baldwin's *Another Country* a "gay" novel, yet it contains some of the boldest and best writing about homosexual relationships and one of the most moving homosexual sex scenes I have yet read. No one has characterized *Last Exit to Brooklyn* a "gay" book, yet it treats of homosexual situations and characters with a frankness and honesty new even to this generation. These are not gay books for the simple reason that in neither does the author make an issue of homosexuality, it's just there, to be dealt with, as might be any other facet of life, as capably as the artistic ability of the author permits.

With this criterion in mind the best thing I can say about *Totempole* is that it is not a gay novel. This is not to damn with faint praise, it is

a fine novel, literate, astute, psychologically sound, and, best of all, eminently readable. Anyone will find it difficult to lay aside. Not only is *Totempole* not "gay" it is not really a novel. It is, rather, a series of vignettes, any one of which could, and two of them have, been published separately as short stories or novelettes. Each deals with a certain period, beginning with almost babyhood, in the life of Stephen Wolfe, the second son of a well-to-do, if not wealthy, Jewish family. It is essential to point out here that the family is Jewish, for everything that happens to Stephen is conditioned by his Jewish background. If one has been forewarned by the jacket blurbs or reviews, the symbolism of even the first chapter cannot be overlooked. It is obvious that Stephen's nascent sexuality is of primary interest. It is, perhaps, unfortunate that there are blurbs and reviews, for Mr. Friedman is subtle and without them the reader might have the pleasure of discovering the symbolism for himself somewhat later. Each episode deals with a period in the development of Stephen's sexuality and its contribution to his eventual total personality. Each period is skillfully related to a particular symbol and the collection of symbols forms the totempole of Stephen's life. The figurative totempole is, itself, related to a "real" totempole which plays an important role in Stephen's development.

That Stephen turns out to be homosexual seems both natural and incidental. We're never told that he is homosexual, as a matter of fact, but the climax of the novel which brings Stephen peace of mind and an acceptance of his body, his personality, and, presumably, a way of life, is a homosexual love affair with a Korean doctor in a prisoner-of-war camp in South Korea. The love affair is described with sensitivity and with a



detail and frankness still new to homosexual literature.

To me *Totempole's* greatest fault is what I consider a lack of balance. Stephen is much more interesting at eighteen or twenty-two than he is at two, or six, or nine, yet the greater part of the novel is devoted to these early years. Of course, it is only in the total collection that this imbalance becomes noticeable. As separate stories each would have been perfect in itself. Much, much too much

## READER AT LARGE

Robert Sale's intentionally non-literate book, *The Oscar*, Simon and Schuster, 1963, Pocket Books, 1964, follows the ill-starred lives of five Hollywood stars seeking the Oscar as Best Actor of the Year. The five are quite a crew of less than lovely juvenile delinquents, all are ready to cheat anyone or anything. One is an alcoholic, another a psychopathic "super-patriot." As sometimes happens, curiously, in a novel like this, the homosexual is the least reprehensible of the lot possibly because the author feels this "ultimate sin" to be a big enough black mark in itself. Be that as it may, Brett Chester, faintly effeminate English actor, is far more victimized than victimizing on the rocky road to the Oscar. Two of the characters are embarrassingly close to the line called libel. The book, soon to be made into

space is given to the drama of Stephen's traumatic experiences with masturbation. True, realistic, and nostalgically painful as this episode may be it is too long in proportion to the novel as a whole.

This is a fascinating book no matter what one's own sexual orientation. It is a landmark both in the destruction of the "gay novel," and an important step toward the creation of a literature about homosexuals.

MARCEL MARTIN

a movie, has substantial homosexual element in the plot.

"The Woman Across the Street," by May Dikeman, in *Best American Short Stories*, 1964, edited by Martha Foley and David Burnett, Houghton Mifflin, 1964, Ballantine, 1965, has several peripheral male homosexual characters and some "witty" cracks to recommend it.

Bill Gunn's novel *All The Rest Have Died*, Delacorte, 1964, amply demonstrates one more facet of this much-talented young Negro actor, director and playwright. It is a novel about Negroes, but not a Negro novel. Rather it is about a young man coming-of-age, and the obstacles he meets and beats. The color line does come up in the rise of Barney Gifford to fame as an actor, but it isn't out of proportion. Barney's life, his rise, his ability as a lover and as a man are closely linked to the violent love he carries with him for the memory of his dearest friend, a male cousin, who died violently and unnecessarily. Part of Barney's adjustment involves his learning just what these feelings mean and finding a way to live with them and remain whole and content. It is subtle and very well done.

The latest John O'Hara collection, *The Horse Knows The Way*, Random House, 1964, has three pertinent stories, and minor references in several



other stories. "The Staring Game" features two women discussing a boyfriend from the past, whose sexual orientation is doubtful, to say the least. This is a reverse twist on a previous O'Hara story, "Jurge Dulruple," in which two lesbians discussed a hapless male suitor "The Jet Set" has a male homosexual theme as something of a surprise) and "Clayton Bunter" concerns the happy menage a trois made up of Clayton, his wife, and his sister

A recent paperback, *Goodbye Charlie*, has a most comical history. In December 1959 the play, *Goodbye Charlie*, by George Axelrod, opened at the Lyceum on Broadway. It starred Lauren Bacall as "Charlie." Charlie is a Don Juan who gets killed by an outraged husband for just cause and returns to earth as a beautiful woman in the flesh, and as good old licentious Charlie inside. The love interest is supplied by George, Charlie's best friend in his/her former life. The play closed in March, 1960. One reviewer commented that the "audience visibly recoiled from the possibility . . ." Now, in 1964, the play has been made into a movie and novelized by Marvin H. Albert published by Dell, 1964 to tie in with the movie release. For what assinine reason we cannot imagine, Debbie Reynolds is grossly miscast as Charlie.

Close dependent interpersonal relationships between three young men form the plot of Thomas Curley's long novel, *Past Eve and Adam's*, Atheneum, 1963. The overt homosexual element is relatively minor taken out of context but the overall involvement and the cause and effect results place this novel high on the list of required reading for those interested in the etiology of homosexuality. Philip Fay, the novel's tortured central character, is a masterpiece of characterization, and his battles over

his involvement with Gerald Weems are memorable.

"Wars kill a long time after, don't they?" Gerald Maune writes to his psychiatrist just before taking his own life in George Steiner's novella, "Sweet Mars." This, the longest of three novellas is *Anno Domini*, London, Faber and Faber, 1964, and N.Y., Atheneum, 1964. Gerald, however, is less a victim of the war and more a victim of his own inability to live in the present. He continually returns in his mind to his public school and college years in England, his romance with Reeve, a sun-streaked day with a boy in a native bazaar, his halcyon week with a Polish soldier, etc. On the other hand, he fights against his homosexuality, and Reeve who really loves him, tries to force him to face himself, and Gerald panics and kills himself. The other two novellas in the collection, while not pertinent, are male-oriented and enjoyable. Mr. Steiner writes very well.

Another man who writes well, John Braine, is definitely less rewarding, for the reasons that make George Steiner a good writer, Mr. Braine cannot draw people and his figures are all sticks of wood in *The Jealous God*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1964, 1965. The former husband of the girlfriend of the hero in this tale of woe is a homosexual who has wisely absented himself from the scene and the roommate of the girlfriend is a lesbian in love in vain, of course. The poor former husband makes an appearance to supply the red herring ending of the book. Only for the patient reader, with a low supply of material.

Continuing examination of older collections of short stories seems to be unendingly potentially rewarding. Recently, in *New Campus Writing* #2, edited by Nolan Miller and Judson Jerome, Putnam's, 1957, I found



the story, "Saul", by Michael Mason, all about the subtle campaign "Susi" Wood conducts to win the favors of his hero, Saul. Although treating a very effeminate boy, it is well done and no "stereotripe" performance. On the other hand, Ruth Moore, noted for her Maine settings and and women's novels, has dipped into the most exaggerated untruths in her novel, *The Sea Flower*, Morrow, 1965. Tch Tch! Miss Moore, for making that old error confusing the homosexual male with the pervert.

No reviewer likes to admit bafflement, so the best course might be to fail to mention this novel. But ignoring Francois Billetdoux's *A Man and His Master*, Hill and Wang, 1964 might deprive some more discerning soul of the opportunity to figure it all out. It is about Fernand, and his consuming involvement with Carnavaggio, to the extent that Carnavaggio becomes Fernand's master, and Fernand, for example, even has to bathe him. It is said to be Gallic humor, but my sense of humor apparently doesn't read French.

A very major book, quite overlooked, is *We Think The World Of You*, by J R. Ackereley, London, The Bodley Head, 1960, and N.Y., Ivan Obolensky, 1962. The reader is introduced to Frank, the kindly middle-aged narrator, who loves Johnny, the only son of a scabrous family. Johnny is a beautiful indigent specimen of worthless young manhood and Frank, quite helpless where Johnny is concerned, is led into caring for the "family" while Johnny serves a prison sentence for stealing. For his labor, he is rewarded by the phrase "we think the world of you." Depending upon individual experiences, you will laugh or cry over this one.

GENE DAMON

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# Night In Eight Lines

Once in bed did the Greeks question

1

what was mere formality and what was mere suggestion?

Did the lady check with eyes so blue

2

through a marble key-hole what she thought was true?

Did all night these bad thoughts pester

3

the horse-driving Gereman Nestor?

And was the father of the other

wakened from his bad dream smothered,

4

as though flesh was lodged in his throat

and another body covered his back like a coat?

Peisistratus, in the morning, awoke last

5

while the departure Telemachus made was fast

The night was not mentioned on their ride,

6

as though both had something they wished to hide

And the author's mentioning of "ashen spear"

7

seems to make the meaning that less clear

Unmarried both they came,

8

unmarried both they remained!

—Craig Amoss



# Letters

Sirs

I have been an avid reader of ONE, and now *Tangents*, for a number of years. I always enjoy the stories and letters contained in each issue.

A few months ago, Hal Call of the Mattachine Society appeared on one of our local t.v. shows to explain something of the homosexual make-up to the general public. I believe it would be a good idea if someone from our own organization here were to make a similar appearance as a representative for the cause of homosexuality. Needless to say we need good representation if we are to gain our rightful place in society and who is better qualified than the editors of *Tangents*? I have written to the station on which Mr. Call appeared suggesting a series of programs on this subject. If you will recall Paul Coates did one or two fairly good shows a few years back, but we have a great deal more freedom of expression now than we did then. I wonder how other readers feel about this?

VENTURA

Sirs

I am very pleased to read that Gene Damon will be writing a column for your *Tangents* magazine. I have read several of her book reviews, and I must say that she knows her way around on matters pertaining to the homosexual theme. A smart gal, Gene. I, for one, will be looking forward to her column with pleasure. The editorial staff is right on the ball with the Newsbit section of *Conf.* And when I read of those fellows who allow themselves to get carried away in public places I am very sorry. They have to learn the hard way. Chapter two of "La Belle Epoque" is by far the best so far. I am looking forward to the others to come.

PASCOAG

Sirs

I believe that *Tangents* could very easily

be made a better seller. I always buy the *Reader's Digest*. I consider it good reading. It always contains many good departments, and lots of humor—the latter which I feel is lacking in our own magazine. I don't think we always have to be serious. Why not laugh a little? It sure helps. Of course, having spent the life of a frustrated "straight" 90% of my life so far I can see humor where you may not. But there are plenty of funny situations around us every day. This is what I would like to see you consider to improve the magazine. Why not suggest that readers send in their humorous experiences?

As a new member and subscriber I hope I am not being a bore. I just thought I'd give the editors some food for thought.

LONG BEACH

Sirs

Contrary to what some of your readers have said about keeping lesbian interests out of the magazine because they have the *Ladder* to read, I am all for including their stories and articles. I have noticed you have been printing more lately. Good. I believe *Tangents* should represent all homosexuals—both men and women. Who wants to read a strictly one-sided magazine?

I believe someone asked about having a question and answers column? It sounded to me like a good idea, and it should be a regular feature. It would be more helpful to readers than the "*Tangents*" column of news. In fact, the latter column should be considerably shortened.

You should also be more selective in your ads. But I realize you need the money.

PASADENA

Sirs

Your attitude toward allowing readers to get in touch with each other rather amazes me, especially since if a "Friend"



of the organization has the time and money you will put him in touch with a number of other "Friends." I refer to your infrequent sponsoring of a gay tour where kindred spirits have a chance to mingle and even meet their neighbors across the seas. Is there any more danger in knowing the name and address of someone who writes an inspiring letter to the organization which is published in the magazine, than there is in being constantly in the company with the same persons for two weeks or more, traveling and staying in hotels together? In the case of the trip, you are just as responsible for putting the persons in touch.

NEW ORLEANS

Sirs

Perhaps I shouldn't say it and you can quote me in your new magazine if you like but the break away from your old sewing circle atmosphere is long overdue. I hope your avowal of open mind and heart toward the contemporary viewpoint on sex and sexual freedoms is complete. From what I have observed in my cross-country jaunt, the attitude of most people in the large metropolitan areas has changed considerably in the last ten years. There is much more crossing the lines (the artificial barrier between hetero and homosexual. This is not to say that American puritan hypocrisy is no longer with us in matters of sex. Apparently the American is still a guilt-ridden, gawky adolescent, confused and irresponsible. But this applies to heterosexual relations as much as it does to homosexual. The sad fact is that the latter in the East more so than in California have been unable to liberate themselves from their baneful inheritance. Maybe it's impossible, given the massive combine of schools, Church, police and organized psychiatry all attuned to the gospel of repression.

But enough of these observations! Washington is very gay but very discreet. Big Brother is watching, you know I sometimes think the whole "District of Columbia" should be sunk under water. The country would probably go on just as it now is. The bars here are sedate no walking around, standing, or dancing. The patrons are restrained compared with Southern California ways. There is no night life, except that I have mentioned. The suburbs of Washington are the dreariest imaginable. The slums are preferable to other parts because there is a little activity there.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Sirs

The October issue of *Tangents* was excellent, and the convict story too moving. Wow!

Hope all is well on Cahuenga Blvd. and to be soon getting even better

LOS ANGELES

Sirs

Do you view SHINDIG on your California TV? It's one of the best produced shows very effective camera work. It's really mad. Don't miss the movie CAT BALLOU one of the best Hollywood films in ages. Michael Callan and Dwayne Hickman are wildly charming. Lee Marvin delightful and the Indian boy really beautiful in a strange way I especially liked the scene in which Lee Marvin adorns himself with the assistance of the Indian boy in cowboy regalia. I also liked Mr Marvin in his lavender long-handled underwear. The picture has been enormously successful here in the East and in Europe.

BALTIMORE

Sirs

The letter from Mr H, a few issues back is very very right. Islands are an answer for the homosexual. I know of one nice Island in Northern Greece which could be bought rather reasonably but it involves getting people of maturity together who have something definite to offer. Wiring, building, farming skills are required. The Isle I have in mind has one house, some water supply of its own but a better supply on a main Island 8 miles away where there are also two huge white sandy beaches with not one soul to use them. The Isle has a small cove to moor a boat on, most of the Isle has sheer cliffs which fall into the beautiful water a paradise for diving enthusiasts. It would probably not be necessary to ever wear clothes except in bad weather. But this is only one place there are literally hundreds of Islands in the Adriatic, Aegean.

Personally I can contribute 3,000 l.p. discs, 15,000 books covering all topics, a pipe organ, and a grand piano.

The only way to do it is take ads in the foreign homophile publications and see what the response is. Let's work on some project before we die!

Jim'



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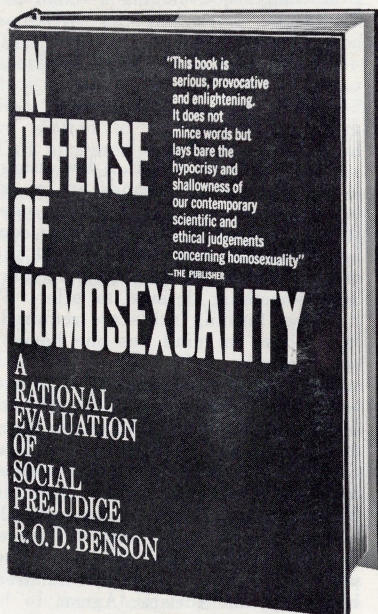
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